

to this was charged with implementing one of the most important natural resource laws ever enacted, the Healthy Forest Restoration Act. The benefits of this legislation and her actions are already being seen on the ground on public land throughout the Nation.

Secretary Norton also recognized the importance of domestic energy production before many others; her legacy will help decrease our dependence on foreign energy sources. This understanding of energy needs was priceless as she worked with Congress on the most comprehensive energy reform legislation in decades.

She also worked tirelessly to improve the efficiency of DOI, reducing duplicative measures and cutting bureaucracy while improving citizen satisfaction with the Department.

She excelled at pushing issues on a national level, but was also instrumental in several projects which are closer to my heart as they are located in Colorado.

Secretary Norton helped with the creation of our Nation's newest national park, The Great Sand Dunes National Park in Colorado. She also helped to create the largest Wildlife Refuge in Colorado, the 92,500 acre Baca National Wildlife Refuge.

Secretary Norton worked to help take the Rocky Mountain Arsenal and Rocky Flats and transform them from national defense sites to wildlife refuges.

As Gale steps down I am somewhat saddened. Her moving on signals the closing of one of the most productive chapters in the Department of Interior's history. But I am excited to see what new endeavors she will take on. In these new adventures I have no doubt that she will meet challenges head on and find the same success that she has seen as Secretary of Interior. I wish Secretary Norton all of the best in her new adventures. Thank you, Gale, for all your hard work.

STATE GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION REPORT CARDS FOR 2005

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, unfortunately the U.S. Congress is not addressing the issue of gun violence prevention, and several States have enacted laws which have made communities, and especially the children who live in them, less safe. Earlier this month, the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence released its 9th annual Report Card on State Gun Violence Prevention Laws and highlighted the inadequacy of many state laws relating to gun safety.

Each year, the Brady Campaign report assigns individual states a grade of "A" through "F" on seven types of gun safety laws that protect children from gun violence. The Brady Campaign includes in its analysis such questions as: Is it illegal for a child to possess a gun without supervision? Is it illegal to sell a gun to a child? Are gun owners held responsible for leaving

loaded guns easily accessible to children? Are guns required to have child-safety locks, loaded-chamber indicators and other childproof designs? Do cities and counties have authority to enact local gun safety laws? Are background checks required at gun shows? And, is it legal to carry concealed handguns in public?

The grades assigned by the Brady Campaign show that State gun laws around the country continue to fall well short of what is needed to adequately protect children from gun violence. While six States received an "A," unchanged from last year, 32 states received a grade of "D" or "F," an increase of one. Only one State improved its grade from last year, while three others took actions that will make communities less safe from the threat of gun violence.

The Brady Campaign notes a few positive developments in State legislatures, including the consideration of state-level assault weapons bans by at least four states. Despite bipartisan support for its reauthorization, the 1994 Federal assault weapons ban was allowed to expire in 2004 due to inaction by the President and Republican leadership in the Congress.

Fortunately, the lack of Federal leadership on the assault weapons ban and several other gun safety issues has not discouraged citizens from working within their own communities and urging State legislatures to address the problems associated with gun violence. The Brady Campaign specifically recognized the importance of gun violence prevention advocates and leaders in several major cities, including Detroit, for their grassroots efforts. These efforts by local community leaders are needed now more than ever. Congress should take up and pass commonsense gun safety legislation to reauthorize and strengthen the assault weapons ban and help keep other dangerous firearms out of the hands of criminals and children.

WOMEN: BUILDERS OF COMMUNITIES AND DREAMS

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I rise today in celebration of Women's History Month during which we as a Nation reflect on the momentous contributions women have made over the course of American history. Throughout our history, women have played vital roles that have helped initiate and guide important social, economic and political change, which has helped to solidify the greatness and prosperity of this Nation. I also want to, in turn, acknowledge that, while great strides have been made, there are still many barriers to equality that must be overcome.

This year's theme for Women's History Month is Women: Builders of Communities and Dreams. This theme recognizes the efforts of women in laying the foundation for greater equality and in building and buttressing movements that have resulted in profound change.

Of course, the foundation of all of our lives begins with our own communities, homes and families. We must not forget to honor the contributions of the women closest to us in their roles as mothers, grandmothers, wives, sisters, daughters, friends, and mentors—who transform and nurture us on a daily basis. As mothers and grandmothers, women spend each and every day building healthy, educated, productive, and happy families.

Building families goes hand in hand with building communities and a better society as a whole. Women have been at the forefront of this Nation's major social movements. One example is Anne Hutchinson, who in 1637 was banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony because her beliefs ran contrary to Puritan teachings. Her courageous stand in the face of persecution helped lay the groundwork for religious freedom as a right. Even when their own rights were severely restricted, women rose up to fight for the rights of others. During the abolitionist movement, the social reform movement, the labor movement, and the civil rights movement, women emerged as leaders in the drive to make our society fairer and better for all Americans. During the civil rights movement, courageous women such as Rosa Parks, Coretta Scott King, and Ella Baker helped break down the walls of racism and ensure that equal justice was had by all regardless of the color of their skin.

The State of Maryland has a rich history of such leaders, including Harriet Tubman, who courageously led a shackled people to freedom via the Underground Railroad; Margaret Brent, who became America's first woman lawyer and landholder; and Clara Barton, founder and first president of the American Red Cross. Likewise, equality in the field of medicine was facilitated with the aid of Mary Elizabeth Garret and Martha Carey Thomas, whose financial support led to the establishment of the Johns Hopkins Medical School, after it was promised that women would not be excluded from admission. We in Maryland are particularly proud of Senator Barbara Mikulski who is Maryland's first female Senator and has served longer than any other woman currently in the Senate. In fact, it was Senator MIKULSKI who sponsored legislation establishing National Women's History Week, the precursor to Woman's History Month, in 1981. Maryland is also the birthplace of another distinguished public servant, House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, whose historic political career took root in the State of Maryland. Leader PELOSI, who hails from a legendary political family in Baltimore, is the first woman in our Nation's history to lead a major political party in Congress. And, in 2006, Maryland leads the country in the number of women serving in the State legislature.

Over the last 50 years, more women have entered the workforce and attained rights previously unavailable.

But this does not mean that, as a Nation, we have erased the adversity and discrimination that continues to stifle equality. According to the U.S. Census, women who work full time, year-round, earned 76 cents for every dollar their male counterparts earned. Gaps in health care coverage affect millions of Americans and women, especially those living in poverty, face significant barriers to receiving care. Access to preventative measures unique to ensuring a woman's health, such as screenings for breast and cervical cancer, has been harder to achieve in recent years and participation rates for such screenings have declined since 2001. Such inequalities are very troubling, and we must continue to work to ensure that these disparities are eradicated for the sake of future generations.

It is a privilege to commemorate and appreciate the women who have made an indelible impact on our lives and the history of this country. I encourage my colleagues to take Women's History Month as a time to reflect on the contributions of women, but also as a time to redouble our efforts to ensure that these achievements are retained and to work toward the goal of full equality.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of Women's History Month. As one of the 14 women in the United States Senate, I consider this tribute of the highest importance. This year's theme for the month is "Women: Builders of Communities and Dreams." There is no better time to salute the work women around the world have done at home and abroad to empower communities.

I am proud to come from the State where Women's History Month was conceived in 1978. Almost 30 years ago, the education task force of the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women in California first established Women's History Week in recognition of the achievements of women. This was soon expanded into a month-long celebration, realizing the dream of honoring women in a special way each year.

Women's History Month recognizes those who continually strive for greatness. One that comes to mind is Mary Helen Rogers, who passed away earlier this month. She dedicated her life to protecting African American families in San Francisco from urban displacement. While raising 12 children, she became an expert in housing laws. She helped start the Western Addition Community Organization, which forced the city to assist the residents it displaced. She later went on to serve as the San Francisco Housing Authority's community relations manager. Mary Helen Rogers demonstrated through her life's work the importance of community activism and the power of an individual to inspire action in those around her.

Just last month we lost another very special woman—Dana Reeve, the widow of actor Christopher Reeve. Her com-

mitment to spinal cord injury research and loving dedication to her husband was unmatched. Since Chris' death, she carried his spirit with her in her drive to push Congress to expand embryonic stem cell research. Dana was the face of the fight on behalf of patients across the country with spinal cord injury, Parkinson's, juvenile diabetes and countless other illnesses. Her passing should serve as call for expansion of embryonic stem cell research. Mrs. Reeve's steadfast loyalty and compassionate care serves as an example to all women. She will be missed.

In Los Angeles, "Sweet" Alice Harris has been a leader in her community for over 40 years. Her steadfast commitment to the community through parent organizations, emergency relief, and youth programs, has made her an example of true community leadership.

As American women, we share a common history: It is a history of fighting for many of the rights and opportunities for which today's young women will prosper. We have come a long way from the days when women had no right to vote, no right to own property, and had extremely limited inheritance or child custody rights.

It wasn't until the Women's Property Act of 1839 that women gained land entitlement. The women's suffrage movement began in 1848; however the 19th amendment, granting women the right to vote, did not come to pass until 72 long years later, in 1920. It is a right for which our predecessors worked hard for. We owe it to them to fulfill our civic duty.

Today, American women are active in every sphere of our society. We have made our mark in this country's private and public sectors. Over 65 million women are a part of the American workforce. There are over 10 million woman-owned businesses. Women represent our Nation around the world. Many proudly wear our Nation's uniform.

Much has changed for over the past century. But make no mistake; much more needs to be done. We must provide improved health care and educational and workforce support for our Nation's women. We need to eliminate violence against women. We need to ensure that women continue to have the right to choose and autonomy over their bodies.

Violence against women is intolerable. Every 15 seconds a woman is battered, and each day four women die from domestic violence. Women should not be threatened by fear and violence. This is why the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization is such an important piece of legislation.

We also need to improve healthcare in our Nation. Breast cancer continues to be a serious threat to women in this country. One out of seven American women will develop the disease, and nearly 41,000 will die from it this year. We must commit ourselves to finding a cure for this disease which affects women regardless of race, class, or religion.

As the sponsor of the breast cancer research stamp, I am proud to say that since its inception in 1998, the stamp has helped raise nearly \$50 million. These funds go a long way to help fund research and increase public awareness for this devastating disease. I am also supporting the National Institute of Health and National Cancer Institute legislative efforts to ensure that women undergoing mastectomy and lumpectomy surgeries are protected during their hospital stays. By continuing to prioritize investment in research, it is my hope that we can reach the goal of eradicating breast cancer by 2015.

Pregnant women must be provided with access to clinical care and parenting support. The U.S. infant mortality rate is 35th in the world. We must change this. Providing mothers with proper nutrition and healthy lifestyle education is key to combating preventable illnesses and deaths in mothers and children. Additionally, women are balancing careers with families more than ever, creating the need for affordable, quality childcare options.

Women are also in the midst of the war in Iraq, and we need to honor these women fighting to protect this country and for the dreams of those women who have been oppressed in Iraq and Afghanistan for too long.

Women began enlisting in the military at the start of World War I. Today women are serving in Iraq in record numbers. Women in the armed services make up 15 percent of active duty personnel. There have been nearly 2,000 California female deployments since 9/11. They do jobs that range from intelligence officers to doctors, to ground soldiers.

In Louisiana, Hurricane Katrina swept communities away in an instant. In the areas hardest hit by Katrina, 56 percent of families are headed by women, who are now taking the lead role in rebuilding the homes and lives their families and neighbors once knew. They deserve our help and support. It is only through their efforts that communities in New Orleans can thrive once again.

I salute the women leading the way in building stronger communities in California and across the Nation. They continue to lead and inspire us all. It is through their tenacity, strength, and passion that we see the transformation of dreams into realities. I have great hope for future generations of women, but we must protect and expand the cherished rights of today's women, so that they may continue to serve their communities and realize their dreams.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

THE PASSING OF JOE TECCE

• Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the life of a great American, a Boston institution, and a personal friend. Earlier